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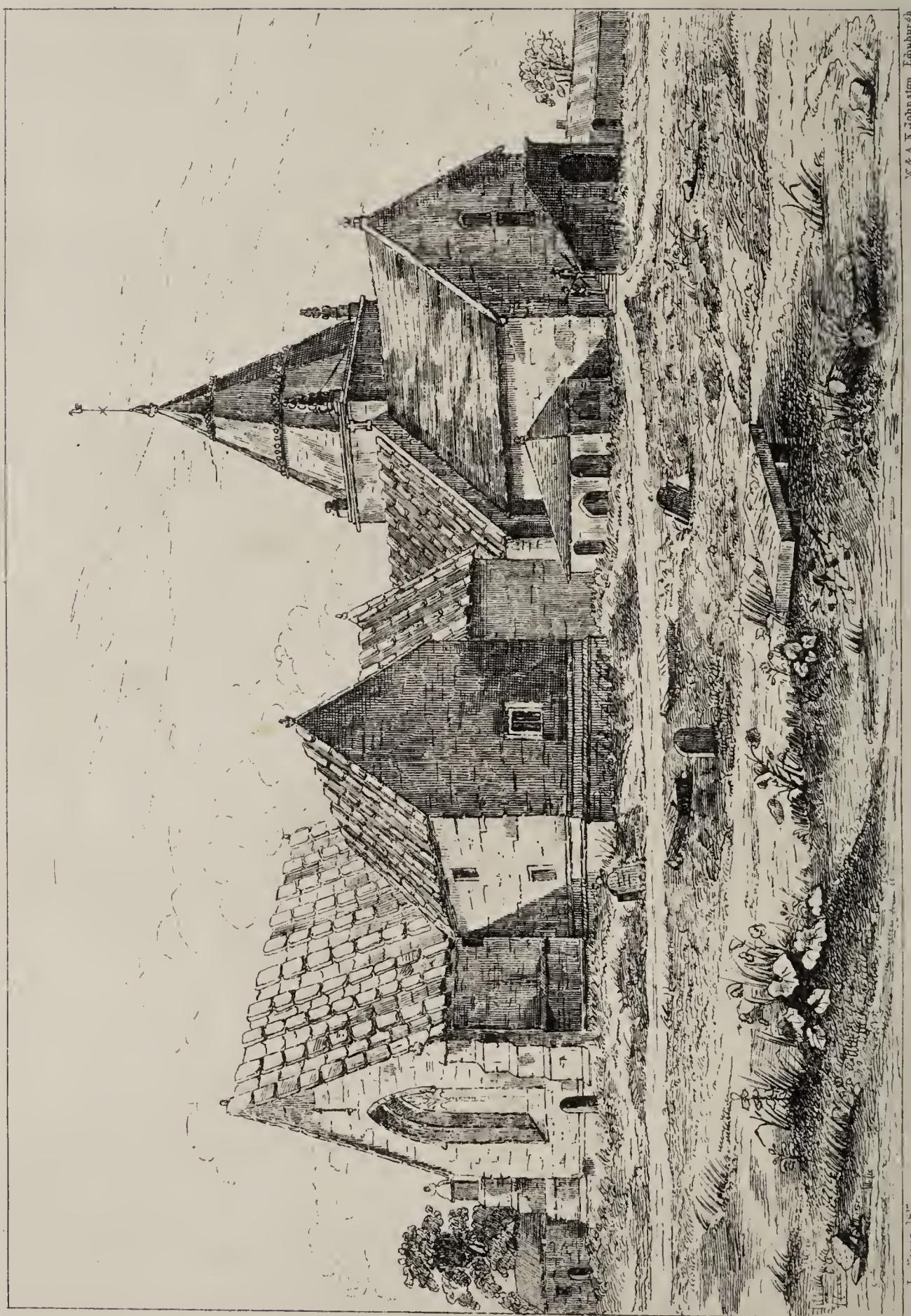
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CORSTORPHINE CHURCH

A History
of the family of
Thomson of Corstorphine

BY

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etc., etc.

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AND THIRTEENTH LORD FORRESTER OF CORSTORPHINE.

PREFACE.

THIS little book is not intended to be an exhaustive genealogy. It has been felt for some time past that an outline of family history should be recorded in permanent form, and it is as an outline only that the following is presented to the reader. Only a very small proportion of the eighteenth and nineteenth century material, genealogical and biographical, has been used, and accounts of collateral branches and allied families have, with few exceptions, been omitted.

The work divides itself into three parts; the first three chapters cover the history of the family from the earliest times down to the close of the eighteenth century; the last three chapters are biographical sketches of the three generations of Congregational divines; and the Appendices, which are devoted to pedigrees, and which many may find the most useful and interesting part.

After a prolonged and close acquaintance with the family history, the author has come to the conclusion that the migration to England caused the ultimate death of the family's adherence to the Congregational Ministry. Although neither would have admitted it, both Patrick and John Radford were out of place in the atmosphere of English Nonconformity. In any case, the identification of the head of the family with that cause came to an end after just one hundred years of sojourn in England, and is never likely to return.

In conclusion, the author's best thanks are tendered to Professor Eilert Ekwall, to Sir James Balfour Paul, K.C.V.O., Lyon King of Arms, to Dr. J. C. Dunlop and Mr. William Angus, both of H.M. Register House, Edinburgh, and to Mr. C. B. Boog Watson, F.R.S.E., for their ready and valuable help and advice.

T.R.T.

Edinburgh,

30th April, 1926.

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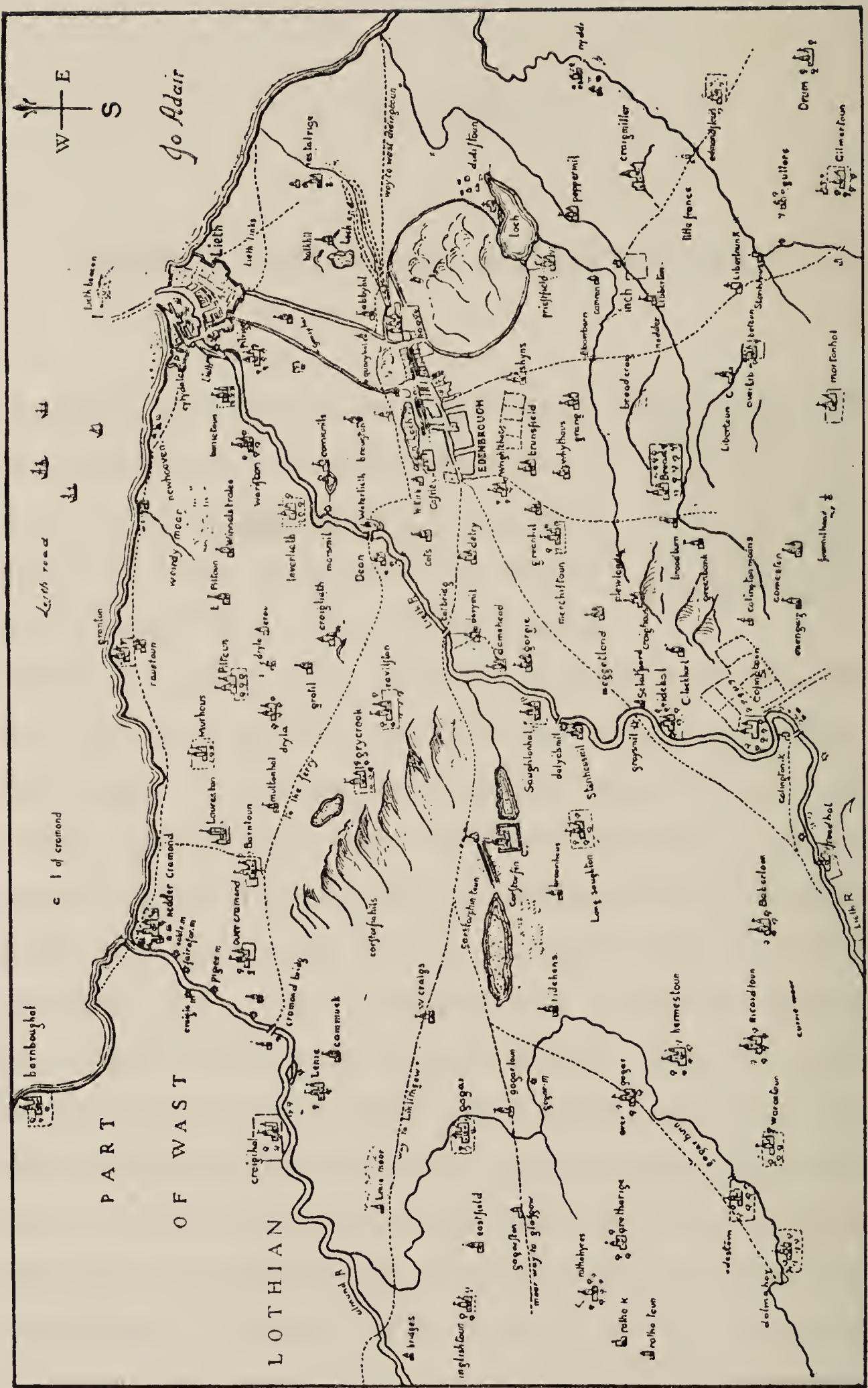
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CHAPTER I.

CORSTORPHINE AND ITS LAIRDS.



N presenting the history of a family it is often advisable first to consider the setting, and then to turn to the persons. This is more especially the case when little is known of the individuals' lives, and where a pedigree shows merely a string of names and dates,—little less bald than a biblical genealogy. In the present case, owing to circumstances mentioned elsewhere, there is very little known of the Corstorphine Thomsons of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and we have little more to say of them than the facts barely set forth in the pedigree. For these reasons, then, we shall in this chapter give some account of Corstorphine and its lords down to the beginning of the eighteenth century, and in the next, we shall deal, as fully as we are able, with the early history of the Thomsons, the generality of whose lives may better be inferred after a perusal of the matter immediately following.



History first takes notice of Corstorphine in the year 1128, when David I. bestowed the “chapel of Crostorfin” and two bovates and six acres of land upon the Canons of Holyroodhouse.¹ The derivation of the name is unknown, but from this, the earliest rendering, we may with reason assume it to be “Thorfinn’s Cross.” Other derivations given in published works² are either too laboured to have the probability of genuineness, or too absurd to stand against modern etymological scholarship. It is impossible to say whether, (i.) Thorfinn raised a cross here, (ii.) a cross was raised here to the memory of Thorfinn, or, (iii.) there was an old cross on land owned by Thorfinn. Who this Thorfinn was, is unknown. Mr. Upton Selway, giving no authority, speaks of “Torphin an archdeacon of Lothian, said to have built a cross at this spot.” Malcolm II. had a grandson of the name, but no connection between him and the place has been traced. The case is similar with Thorfinn, Earl of the Orkneys, fl. circa 1165. A few miles south of Corstorphine, near Juniper Green, is a Torphin Hill. Mr. Johnson, speaking of Corstorphine, says, “a cross certainly stood here,” and gives no authority. Personally, I am inclined to the view

¹ Cart. of Holyroodhouse.

² Johnson’s “Place Names of Scotland,” Edr. 1903.

that Corstorphine and Torphin Hill take their names from one Torphin,¹ an early Norse proprietor.

Apart from the somewhat unsatisfactory evidence which may be adduced from etymology, we have no record of a proprietor of Corstorphine until the time of Alexander II., when David le Mareschall possessed the estate. In "Ragman's Roll" (1296), the names of David le Mareschall and William de la Roche occur as proprietors of Corstorphine. The le Mareschall family continued in possession until the reign of David II., when the estate was forfeited, and given by the King to Malcolm Ramsay, the first Scot to be its holder. We next hear of it being held by William More of Abercorn, who disposed it to his brother Gilchrist, who sold² it in August, 1376, to Adam Forstar, or Forrester, whose descendants were to hold it for three hundred years and more.

Adam Forrester, afterwards knighted, was a person of importance. He was allowed to import grain from England free of duty. In 1373, 1378, and 1387 he was Provost of Edinburgh, and in 1382 Sheriff of Lothian. In 1390 he was made Keeper of the Great Seal.³ On 14th September, 1402, he was present at

¹ This is, in the main, the opinion of Professor Ekwall.

² Reg. Mag. Sig. folio vol. 136, 48, 49.

³ *Ibid.*, 184, 12.

the battle of Homildon Hill, and having been taken prisoner was, with other illustrious prisoners, presented to Henry IV. in full Parliament, where he acted as spokesman for the others.¹ In 1403-4 he was depute Chamberlain for the Southern half of the Kingdom. His first wife was Agnes, daughter of John Dundas of Dundas.² In 1380, Adam had built a new chapel, near the older one, then in use as parish church, and caused it to be dedicated to St. John the Baptist. He died on the 13th October, 1405.³ His tombstone has been built into the southern wall of the present church, and can be deciphered, in part, to this day.

On 22nd March, 1392, Adam's son, Sir John Forrester, obtained a charter of the lands of Corstorphine from Sir William More of Abercorn, then the superior. Sir John was brought up at court, also fought at Homildon Hill in 1402, and in 1408 acted as Depute-Chamberlain under the Earl of Buchan.⁴ He had a crown charter of the Barony of Corstorphine in 1424, and on the King's return from England, having acted as one of his hostages, he was made Master of the Horse, and Lord High Chamberlain. In 1429 he founded a Provostry or Collegiate Church, which was

¹ Parly. Hist. II., 71.

² Douglas' Baronage.

³ Charters of St. Giles, 41.

⁴ See Appendix B, note.

probably an addition to, or adaptation of, the second chapel built by his father fifty years previously. The original chapel, then parish church, was adjacent, but seems gradually to have been superseded. In 1448, Sir John Forrester died.

The next laird, his eldest son, also a Sir John, was "better fitted for the field than for the cabinet." In 1446, together with William, Earl of Douglas, he led the troops against Chancellor Crichton and demolished Barnton Castle.¹ Within a year the Chancellor had devastated the estate of Corstorphine and destroyed its castle. Sir John's son, Sir Alexander, led pilgrimages to the shrines of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury and John de Amyace in Picardy, and took with him several followers.² He died in 1466-67.³

We may here deviate from our history to give some account of Corstorphine in the fifteenth century. There were then in existence the two chapels, probably standing close to one another. The older was in use as a parish church, the newer, then a Collegiate Church, is now the parish church. Westward from the kirkyard ran the village street, if it could

¹ Auchenleck Chronicle.

² Rot. Scot., II.

³ For an account of the tombs of the two Sir Johns, see Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot., 1876 and 1895.

then be dignified with such a name. On the north side was a row of thatched houses of "mixed" construction, probably a smithy, certainly an inn or, at least, drinking house. The eastern end of the street turned sharp to the north beside the kirkyard, as it does at this day, to join the Edinburgh-Glasgow road. Somewhere near this junction branched off the "Craigs" road and, following the old ridge road, passed what is now the hamlet of Four Mile Hill to leave the parish at Leny Port. On the west lay Gogar, which was not yet added to the parish. Immediately south of the village lay the castle. Of the details of its construction nothing is known, as it was destroyed under the circumstances mentioned above. It probably consisted of a keep with a hall on the first floor, used as a dining and common room, and sleeping quarters for the more personal of the servants. Dried rushes from the surrounding marsh land covered the floor. The lord and his family dined on the dais at one end, the lord himself being the only occupier of a chair; indeed, this chair would probably be the only one in the castle. The retainers messed at a long trestle table below. At the side, stood the cupboard where stood the vessels, ornamental and useful. Above the dais would be the "chamber of dés," which was the retiring and sleeping room of the lord's



CORSTORPHINE CASTLE IN 1777.

family.¹ Above this room or rooms was probably a gallery, and turrets for defence, and possibly a pitched roof.² On the ground floor were storerooms and offices, and beneath very possibly a dungeon. Around lay a moat crossed by a drawbridge on the north side.³ Communicating with the moat would be the western and eastern lochs; across the latter would be carried provisions from Colbridge.

Immediately surrounding the moat was some good cultivated land. Beyond this, to the south, lay a dreary marsh. To the south-east lay the estate of Saughton,⁴ but who held it,⁵ and what buildings were therein, we cannot say. To the north-east lay the hamlet of Ravelston, but of what it consisted at this early period is unknown. Two or three small farmsteads would complete the topography of the parish.

Sir Alexander Forrester, the last-mentioned, was succeeded by his son Archibald, who was infest in Corstorphine on 20th February, 1467, and is mentioned as present in Parliament on 7th January, 1504-5. During his lifetime the castle was in process of rebuilding. The new building was on a much larger

¹ See "Domestic Life in Scotland," 1488-1688, by John Warrack.

² See Clerk of Eldin's drawing of the neighbouring castle of Lauriston, in 1775. The older building should particularly be noticed. There is a good reproduction in Mr. John T. Fairley's book, "Lauriston Castle," 1925.

³ See Map.

⁴ 1150, "Salectuna," i.e. the hamlet by the willows.

⁵ Probably Bellendens or Watsons.

scale than the usual 16th century manor house. It consisted of a quadrangle with interior courtyard, flanked by massive towers at each corner, and surrounded by a deep moat with a stone bridge on the eastern side. It was completed about the year 1508. In the summer of this year died at Sir Archibald¹ Forrester's house at Corstorphine the illustrious Bernard Stuart, lord of Aubigné, whom Dunbar calls the Flower of Chivalry.² Sir Archibald married Margaret, daughter of Patrick Hepburn, first Lord Hailes, and was succeeded by his son Sir Alexander, who obtained a charter under the Great Seal to the barony of Corstorphine on 12th September, 1533. He married Margaret, daughter of Sir Duncan Forrester of Gairden, Master of the Household to James IV., and was succeeded by his grandson-in-law, James Forrester³ of Meadowfield, who married Agnes, daughter of Sir Alexander Forrester's son Walter, who died young. This James Forrester of Meadowfield, who succeeded to Corstorphine, had two sons, James and Henry. Their father was killed at the battle of Pinkie, and James⁴ succeeded, but dying without issue in 1589,

¹ Not Sir John as stated by Laing and others.

² "Elegy on the death of Bernard Stuart, lord of Aubigny." See also, "Bosworth Field," by Sir John Beaumont.

³ For complete understanding of the succession, the pedigree in Appendix A should be consulted.

⁴ In the time of this James, in 1572, the house and college were garrisoned by Mar with a view to preventing supplies reaching Kircaldy of Grange, who was holding Edinburgh Castle for the Queen.

was succeeded by his brother Henry on the 8th November of that year. Sir Henry married Helen Preston of Craigmillar, and in 1607 resigned the barony in favour of his son George, tenth laird of the name.

Sir George Forrester was created a baronet in 1625, and a peer in 1633, under the title of Lord Forrester of Corstorphine. He married Christian, daughter of Sir William Livingston of Kilsyth, and had issue five daughters.¹ He was an elder of the parish, and attended assiduously to his duties as such.² In 1627 Ravelston and Saughton were added to the parish, and in 1646 the older church was demolished. Sir George, first Lord Forrester, died in 1651, and the honours passed to the family of Baillie,¹ who took the name of Forrester.

In 1650, the parish was occupied, first by General Leslie, and then by Cromwell. Leslie entrenched himself on Gogar field, whence owing to the boggy nature of the ground,³ Cromwell was unable to dislodge him. The skirmish of Gogar lasted until the evening of 27th August.⁴ The crops had been harvested a few

¹ See Appendix A.

² For an account of parochial troubles at this time see New. Stat. Account I., 241.

³ "Cromwell's Scotch Compaigns," by W. S. Douglas, 1899.

⁴ Gogar fight was known locally as "The Flashes." See Thomson's Acts, VII., 46.

days before, the villagers having anticipated an engagement. Sometime during this campaign Leslie had his headquarters at Corstorphine Castle, and Adair's map of 1680 shows that the two lochs were then still in existence. After the battle of Dunbar, the English army occupied Corstorphine and the neighbourhood, and much damage was done to the church monuments by Cromwell's "saints," and the estate generally was laid waste. James, second Lord Forrester, who had just succeeded to the Barony, was fined £2,500 sterling by Cromwell. He was deeply involved in debt, and became wild and abandoned. The following piece of history, very relevant to our story, is the final illustration of his character. It is given verbatim from Fountainhall's "Decisions," M.S.

"August 26, 1679. This day did Christian Hamilton, wife to A. Nimmo, merchant, kill James Lord Forrester, with his own sword, in his garden at Corstorphin.¹ She confessed the fact, and pretended she was provoked thereto, because he in his drink had abused her and called her w---e. Being apprehended and imprisoned, the sheriffs of Edinburgh gave her an indictment to the 28th of August, when she made a long discourse of the circumstances and

¹ The deed is said to have been done under the Corstorphine Plane, now the last standing tree of the old avenue.

manner of it, seeking to palliate and extenuate it, yet subscribed her confession of the fact; and for putting it beyond all cavillation, they also adduced three witnesses, two men and her woman, who saw it; but she having pretended she was with child, the sheriff and his deputes directed a commission, recommending to Doctors Stevenson and Balfour, &c., to visit her, and report; who having done so, they declared that after trial they could perceive no signs of her being with child. However, if the pannel had been with child, she did not deny but it was to Lord Forrester, which was both adultery (she being married and not divorced) and incest, she being my lord's first lady's niece, and sister's daughter; so that the visible judgment of God may be read both upon her and him. Her affirming herself to be with child was but a shift to procure a delay.¹ On 19th September, Christian Hamilton gave in a bill to the lords of privy council, representing that the sheriffs gave her no time to provide herself with advocates, so that she had omitted her defences, and begged the council would examine her witnesses, and take trial of the manner of the commission of the slaughter, viz., that he was then drunk, in which condition he commonly was very

¹ She was not then with child, but her infant daughter was then only about a year old.

furious ; that she was exceedingly provoked ; that he run at her with his sword ; that she took it from him to preserve herself from hazard ; and that he ran upon the sword's point, and thereby gave himself the mortal wounds whereof he died, and so killed himself ; and she stood only upon her lawful defence. This relation was known to be false, and therefore the lords of the privy council did now little regard it, tho' it was relevant in itself. She was a woman of a godless life, and *ordinarily carried a sword beneath her petticoats*. On the 29th September she made her escape out of the Tolbooth, in man's apparel, in the glooming, about 5 o'clock at night, but was the next day found at Falal-Mill, where she had staid, and did not hasten to the English Borders, and was brought back to the Tolbooth on the 1st of October, and was beheaded at the Cross of Edinburgh the 12th November. She was all in mourning, with a large wail, and before the laying down of her head, she laid it off, and put on a whyte taffetie hood and bared her shoulders with her own hands, with seeming courage enough. Mrs. Bedord, who murdered her husband, and committed adultery with Geilles Tyre, was this Mistris' Nimmo's cusing germane, and of the family of Grange. And they say that the Ladie Warriston, who about 100 years ago strangled her husband, Kincaid of Warriston,

she was of the same family." In his closet after his death was a dispensation from the Pope to marry her, and it is said that his delay in using this was the cause of her fury."¹

With this story concludes the lairdship of the Forresters. In the following chapter we shall describe the early history of the Thomsons and the relationship between the families, and thus complete the history of both so far as it belongs to the ancient barony of Corstorphine.

¹ Quoted in Kirkliston's "History of the Church of Scotland."

General References.

Old Statistical Account.

New Statistical Account.

"A Midlothian Village," by G. Upton Selway.

Douglas' "Scots' Peerage," edited by Sir J. B. Paul, K.C.V.O.

The Complete Peerage by G. E. C., revd. ed.

Registrum Domus de Soltre . . . , etc., printed by the Bannatyne Club, 1861.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY FAMILY HISTORY.



HE earliest evidence which can be produced in most family histories is to be found in the study of the family name, and although it is beyond the scope of this work to enter into any general remarks on the origins of surnames, some account must be given of the origin of our own. The mere etymology—"son of Thomas"—is obvious enough, and in spite of the fact that most obvious etymologies are wrong, this interpretation may be accepted with entire confidence. The matter, however, cannot be dismissed as unworthy of further attention, as useful information can be got from a source apparently so barren.

In Scotland, the surname Thomson is now probably sixth commonest,¹ in the North of England,² it is fairly common. As regards distribution, past and present,

¹ See Seton's "Law and Practice of Heraldry in Scotland," 1863; p. 378.

² "Thompson" is about the twenty-first commonest name in England and Wales. See Lower's "Patronymica Britannica," p. xxvi.

it is essentially a Lowland name. The Swedish form, Tomasson, the Danish Thomassen, and the Dutch Thomsen, are all common and ancient patronymics in their respective countries. In general, it may be said that this surname (in its varying forms) is commonest in the Lothians, the North of England, Scandinavia and Scotland.

Now surnames, as distinct from patronymics derived from some locality of which the family were lords, came into general use at the end of the twelfth century; and in a true patronymic surname such as this, a very common personal name of origin should be found at that period in the area comprising the above-mentioned localities. Further, such a personal or "pet" name should serve as a valuable ethnographic pointer. Now "Tumi," "Tommie," and "Tombi," occur fairly frequently in Domesday Book as (obviously pre-Norman) holders of land, and tenants *in capite*. In Old Norse, "Tumi" is a pet name for Thomas. In the older Scottish records, the names Thome, Thome filius, and Thomesone, occur from time to time. The earliest mention noticed by the author is in the Chamberlain Rolls¹ under date of 1337, where appears a certain "Eugenius Thome filius."

¹ Printed by the Bannatyne Club.

Let us now consider the early inhabitants of Lowland Scotland,¹ who used such names, and their racial origin. In the eleventh century, Lothian was peopled by Angles, Saxons, Frisians, Jutes, and the descendants of Norse pirates. There was probably a very meagre admixture of Roman blood, derived from the settlement and fortress at Inveresk. This population, although for a time subject to various local Kings,² did not become a politically homogeneous people until after the battle of Carham³—the battle which gave the King of the Scots the ascendancy and Scotland its name.

Among these peoples, the pet name for Thomas was Thomé, doubtless existing in various slightly differing forms.⁴ Thus, admitting the etymology and the Lothian origin, we can reasonably assume that Thomson stock are Anglian stock arising from peoples emigrant from the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Elbe.

From the date of origin of the surname to the first Thomson of our family on record, is a gap of more than three hundred years. During the whole or part of this time the family may have lived in, or near, the

¹ Excluding Strathclyde, where the British element still preponderated.

² As early as 547 there was a King of Bernicia (Ida).

³ Malcolm won the Battle of Carham in A.D. 1018.

⁴ A very ancient and obvious pet name, now spelt "Tommy"!

place now called Corstorphine. In any case, it is useless to speculate on a period barren of any evidences, and we shall turn at once to the founder of the family we know.

Such was ALEXANDER THOMSON, born in Corstorphine about 1460. He is said to have married Margaret, sister of James Forrester of Meadowfield, but there is no evidence to prove this.^{1, 5} The marriage seems a very probable one, and one small fact is of significance in this respect. It appears from the will of Alexander Thomson the second, son to the above, that there lived with him at the time of his death James Forrester's grandson, son of Kathleen Lauriston, wife of Thomas Lauriston of that ilk.² No more is known of Alexander Thomson, the first, but that he fell on the stricken field of Flodden with the thousands who perished on that ill-fated autumn afternoon.³ In the words of the historian ". . . no defeat bore less of dishonour, no battle lost by chivalrous folly was ever so well redeemed by desperate valour, and no fight since chariots charged on the plains of windy Troy has been so chanted by a descendant of the Flowers of the Forest."⁴

¹ See pedigree in Appendix A.

² See "Lauriston Castle," by John T. Fairley, 1924.

³ 9th September, 1513: The English found thirteen earls dead in a ring round James' corpse.

⁴ Andrew Lang: "History of Scotland," vol. I.

⁵ Douglas' "Scots Peerage," 1907; iv., 88.

Alexander Thomson left two sons, William and Alexander. William was living in 1587, when he was mentioned in his brother's will. He had a son William who migrated to Ulster,¹ but of whom nothing else is known. William, the first, was his brother's legatee to the extent of a "black kist." The second ALEXANDER was born in Corstorphine at the end of the fifteenth century,² and feued land from the Forresters, which he used as a farm and market garden.³ He was a man of considerable importance in Corstorphine as he employed four or five servants,⁴ and had a good array of creditors and debtors. As before mentioned, Lady Lauriston's son lived with him. This Lady Lauriston was born Kathleen Forrester, and we find that on 2nd March, 1564-65, Sir James Forrester of Corstorphine had a charter⁵ of certain portions of the lands of Lauriston with half of the house, gardens, etc., and the superiority of that portion of the lands which formed the terce of Katherine Forrester his sister, the widow of Thomas Lauriston of that ilk. The land was after-

¹ To Ballinderry. The family of the late Captain William Thomson, 78th Highlanders (of which Mr. Henry Broughton Thomson, of Scarvagh House, Scarva, Co. Down, and Major-Gen. Sir William Montgomerie Thomson, K.C.M.G., etc., are members) derive from Ballinderry, his father having been born there. There is a tradition in this family that the original emigrant came from Midlothian.

² Circa 1498, Burke's "Landed Gentry," 14th Edition, Suppt.

³ Old Stat. Acct. XIV., 452; and New Stat. Acct. I., 221.

⁴ See his will, Edr. Commt. Reg. under date 1587.

⁵ Reg. Mag. Sig.

wards sold to the Napier family, one of whom, Sir Alex. Napier (brother of John Napier of Merchiston,¹ the inventor of Logarithms), built Lauriston Castle at the end of the sixteenth century.

Alexander Thomson married Janet Gourlay, and by her had a son and only child, Bernard. This Bernard was so named after the most illustrious Bernard Stuart “the flower of Chivalry,” mentioned in the preceding chapter, who died at Corstorphine in 1508. Janet Gourlay, who survived her husband, had a sister who married a John Young to whom Alexander bequeathed his sword. Alexander died at Corstorphine on 23rd September, 1587, and left 136 L. Scots. He must have been taken ill suddenly,—probably of the plague, which was raging in Edinburgh and Leith that autumn,—as his will was signed only the day before he died. He was doubtless buried in Corstorphine old kirkyard. His will concludes with the following words, “. *In witness heirof I haif causit Mr. Thomas Mairioribankis noter publick to subsryne this my testament and latter will in respect of my waiknes that I could not wryte my self for the tyme sic subscribitur Alexr. Thomseone witht my*

¹ There is in the possession of the author a receipt of 1458 bearing the autograph signature of James II., giving quittance of 400 merks to Alex. Napier of Merchiston, for lands in Balbartainis, “sometime belonging to our cousin, James, Lord Dalkeith.”

hand at the pen led be the notar publick underwritten at my command becaus I could not writt myself. Ita est magister Thomas Marioribankis ex speciali mandato dicti Alexandri scribere nesciess teste manu propria."

BERNARD THOMSON married, before September, 1587, Agnes Balzert, and by her had two sons, Bernard, born about 1562, and Richard. This Richard was minister in Ratho, and from the Edinburgh marriage register it seems probable that it was he who, on 19th January, 1604, married Agnes Foulis.¹ A son David was served heir to his father Richard "minister in Ratho" on 8th July, 1607.² Bernard Thomson, the first, died about 1600.³

BERNARD THOMSON the second had two sons, Alexander born in 1608, and James. Bernard died at an advanced age at Morton Hall, between 1650 and 1655.⁴

ALEXANDER THOMSON, his elder son, a tenant in Saughton, had three sons, William, a tenant in the lairdship, who was baptised 22nd January, 1638,⁵ and with whose descendants⁶ we are not concerned, Ninian,

¹ Probably of the Ravelston family: see Mr. Selway's "A Midlothian Village," p. 34, *et seq.*

² Gen. Retours 313.

³ Burke's "Landed Gentry."

⁴ His testament dative appears in vol. 68 of the Edr. Commit. Testaments: confirmed 18th October, 1655.

⁵ Corstorphine parish register.

⁶ See pedigree in Appendix A.

who married Isobel, sister of James Nimmo, and John,¹ the eldest, born in 1637.

JOHN THOMSON had a farm at Lenymoor² at the western extremity of the parish, and married Margaret Greirson, said to be of the family of Lag. By her, he had a son Robert, and a daughter Bessie, who married Thomas Lauriston of Broomhous, her cousin's brother-in-law.

ROBERT THOMSON was baptised at Cramond on the 30th of March, 1673. This baptism in a neighbouring parish not to be wondered at. It was a most unsettled time for Corstorphine.³ After the battle of Dunbar, “ both the clergymen and the principal landed proprietors absented themselves from the parish, and Lord Forrester was actively engaged in attempting to raise the country against the English.”⁴

Robert Thomson married at Corstorphine, on 27th November, 1718,⁵ Christian Mathie, natural daughter of the second Lord Forrester,⁶ and (through her mother, Christian Hamilton or Nimmo), granddaughter of the first Lord (and tenth laird) Forrester of Corstorphine.

¹ Burke says “ 4th in descent from Bernard.” He is wrong. John was Bernard’s grandson.

² See map.

³ Vide Chap. I.

⁴ New Stat. Acct.

⁵ Corstorphine parish register.

⁶ See the article on the Lords Forrester in G.E.C.’s “ Complete Peerage,” 2nd Edn.

The story of Christian Nimmo's end bears repetition in a strain different to that of Fountainhall, which we have already given. "She," says Mr. Upton Selway,¹ "upon learning that Lord Forrester, when drunk, had spoken evil of her, came in great fury to the castle, and not finding him there, sent for him to the Black Bull. They met not far from the Pigeon House to the east of the castle, and after upbraiding him in violent terms, and being no doubt greatly incensed by his drunken replies, she drew his sword from its sheath and murdered him at the foot of this plane tree. This occurred on the night of 26th August, 1679. The murderess took refuge in the castle, but was discovered before she could make preparations for escape from the village. Her capture, it is said, was owing to the falling of one of her slippers through a crevice of the floor to a room below. She confessed her crime and was sentenced to death, but between the days of trial and that of execution she escaped, disguised as a man, and was captured again at Fala Mill. She was beheaded at the Cross of Edinburgh, exhibiting great fortitude and coolness, on the 12th of November.

"Besides this 'owre true tale,' legend has it that this Lord Forrester buried treasure beneath this tree, and that, not so many years ago, a bold villager,

¹ "A Midlothian Village."

actuated by visions of future opulence, going at night to dig up the hoard, was terrified by a hollow voice, evidently some feet below the surface, commanding him to desist. Needless to say, he fled trembling, and from that date, no one has attempted to recover or discover the hidden wealth."

It is probable that the daughter Christian, born to them the year before, was brought up in Edinburgh in the care of the Mathies and adopted their name. Robert and Christian lived in a house in "the meadows" of Corstorphine, and their children were baptised at Corstorphine as follows:—George and Isobel, twins, on 4th October, 1721, John on 14th January, 1724, and Christian on 16th May, 1725.¹

GEORGE THOMSON, only surviving child, seventh in descent from the first Alexander Thomson, and thirteenth² in descent from Sir Adam Forrester first of Corstorphine, married Elizabeth Alexander,³ daughter of Alexander Alexander of Leith, and Elizabeth Line his wife. Alexander Alexander derived from the Alexanders of Menstrie, and was sixteenth in descent from King Robert II. The descent is given in Appendix B. George Thomson was buried at Corstorphine 30th

¹ Par. reg.

² Fourteenth, probably by two separate lines of descent: see Appendix A.

³ She was baptised at Kirkliston, 4th September, 1725.

December, 1797,¹ and left by his wife above-mentioned a son Alexander, the subject of the following chapter.

The close of the seventeenth century saw the castle in decay, and the beginning of the modern village. Forresters and Thomsons had made their exits. With the dying echoes of the clatter of dragoons at the Canter of Coltbrigg ends the history of Corstorphine. Although its ancient inhabitants may sleep on undisturbed in the old kirkyard, the site of its very castle is soon to be covered by the bricks and mortar of suburbanism.

¹ Par. reg.

1135644

General References.

- Old and New Statistical Accounts.
- Corstorphine Parish Register and Kirk Session Records.
- Edinburgh Commissariot Register.
- Registers of the Great Seal.
- Barber, "British Family Surnames."

CHAPTER III.

ALEXANDER THOMSON OF EDINBURGH
AND HIS FAMILY.

HE latter half of the eighteenth century was, throughout Scotland, a time of great awakening. Rents were still rising, wages were improving, and merchant communities, especially those engaged in overseas trade, were rapidly becoming prosperous. In national life, changes for the better, occurring after a century of the most widespread and abject poverty, were being reflected alike in the family. Families were being made, and being broken, and, more commonly still, were being scattered over the face of the country. With the spread of communications the process became immensely widened, until a hundred years later the ubiquity of the Scot had become a byeword among the nations.

And so, to our own family. After a sojourn in Corstorphine, possibly extending to nine hundred

years, and almost certainly to four hundred, a move was made. Young Alexander, whose birth was recorded in the last chapter, migrated to Salton, a parish on the opposite side of Edinburgh. Several families of Thomson were living in the vicinity, and some of these may have been cousins, descendants of John Thomson in the lairdship of Corstorphine, who died in 1728. In the neighbouring parish of Crichton lived John Thomson, grandfather of the first Lord Sydenham, and in Cranston two families of Thomson seem to have been established for some years previously. One might reasonably conjecture that a chance meeting in Edinburgh with the beautiful Ann Crumbie was the final factor towards Alexander's decision to settle at Salton. There is no evidence, or family tradition, to account for the move. The Kirk Session records furnish no help in this respect, there being no record of the issue of letters of demission in the Corstorphine minute book, and no Kirk Session record for Salton between the years of 1750 and 1795. However, we know that Alexander and Ann, described as "in this parish" were proclaimed for marriage in Salton on June 9th, 1770.¹ Alexander's friend Andrew Anderson was his cautioner and John Crumbie was cautioner for Ann.

¹ Salton par. reg.

We may here give some small account of Ann's family. She and her two sisters, Helen born in 1742, and Marion born in 1745, were children of Alexander Crumbie in West Salton and Marion Ladley his wife. Ann was baptised 6th November, 1743, and was born, to be precise, at 8 p.m., on 31st October, 1743, in the parish of Salton. Marion Ladley or Laidlaw was married to Alexander Crumbie at Salton in 1739. She was the daughter of John Laidlaw in Wester Salton and Janet Reid, having been baptised in the neighbouring parish of Humbie on July 14th, 1715. Alexander Crumbie was baptised on December 1st, 1711, also, at Humbie, his parents being Alexander Crumbie in Wester Salton, and Helen Ormiston. For a full account of the origin and pedigree of the family of Crumbie the reader should consult Deuchar's M.S. notes made in Edinburgh during the Crumbie land claim of the early nineteenth century.¹

The first child of the newly-married Alexander and Ann was born 24th May, 1771, and baptised Marion on the 26th, in Salton church.² The witnesses were John Crumbie and Andrew Anderson. In 1772, the family moved to the eastern suburbs of Edinburgh, and here Alexander probably feued a yard to carry on

¹ Now in the possession of the Society of Genealogists.

² Salton par. reg.

his work as a wright.¹ Not then being a burgess of the city, he could not work within its boundaries. Hence he settled in the growing suburbs, in Pleasance, then a small collection of houses on the Kelso-London road, and true to its name. A comparison of the maps of Edgar (1765) and Ainslie (1780)² will show how fast building was then proceeding in this area, now a mean and crowded district of Edinburgh proper.

To this neighbourhood also came Alexander's two friends, John Crumbie, his wife's cousin, and Andrew Anderson, both wrights. The three must have found plenty of lucrative employment in the acres of houses being built round about Hope Park (now the Meadows) and the two London roads. It should be mentioned in passing that the employment of wright was by no means an unusual one at this time even in families of the first social rank. "It was not," says Graham,³ "considered below their dignity to become apprentices to shopkeepers who under the vaguely comprehensive title of 'merchant' might deal in anything from tallow candles to Tay pearls Silversmiths,

¹ At the close of the Corstorphine period the family were very much impoverished; Corstorphine had never really recovered from the Cromwellian occupation: *vide Chap. I.*

² See the "Collection of Early Edinburgh Maps," published by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

³ "Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century," 1901; also Dunbar's "Social Life," p. 143, and other references given in the above. The fifth Lord Kirkcudbright was a glover in Edinburgh!

clothiers, woollen drapers, were frequently men of high birth and social position."

Alexander and his wife did not stay long in Pleasance. One child, Elizabeth, born on Christmas Day, 1772, could call it her birthplace. She was baptised at St. Cuthbert's on January 6th, 1773, Anderson and John Swarrell, a mason in the New Town, being the witnesses. By the time John was born (29th October, 1774), the family had moved to a little group of houses at the edge of Hope Park, named Burrow Loch, after the Loch which used to cover that pleasant expanse. The name still survives, and there is there, at the time of writing, the old timber yard used originally by Alexander. Burrow Loch was drained about 1730 giving place to Hope Park.¹ This in turn became The Meadows, now a recreation ground for the juvenile population of the district.

The boy John was baptised at St. Cuthbert's November 1st, 1774, the witnesses being "David Smeal Brewer at Burrow Lock and John Crumbie² Wright there." John died in childhood, although it is not known where and when he was buried. The next child was Agnes, baptised at St. Cuthbert's, January

¹ On 7th September, 1722, the land was let to Thomas Hope for 57 years at a yearly rental of £800.

² Now partner of Alexander.

30th, 1777 ("born Sabbath 19th inst"). The witnesses at the baptism were "Edward Home Brewer in Pleasance and John Crumbie Wright there." Agnes also died young. Another daughter, Christian,¹ followed. She was baptised at St. Cuthbert's, March 13th, 1779.

A second son, Alexander, the subject of the following chapter, was born on 3rd May, 1781, and baptised at St. Cuthbert's on 10th May in the presence of the same Home and Crumbie. The latter, however, is described as then living in Nicholson's Street.

By the time James, the youngest child of Alexander and Ann, was born, another move had been made. After about ten years at Burrow Loch, Alexander moved to Giffords Park, the name given to some houses a few minutes' walk from Burrow Loch, built on the march of the once park.² The street now passing by this name is a dark and dirty slum. Here then was born James, their youngest child.³ He was baptised on January 17th, 1784.⁴ Six years later, Ann Crumbie died. We are told of the boy Alexander, "At nine years old he was bereft of his mother; and an elder surviving sister has a distinct recollection of his coming

¹ The seventh and last of a series of "Christians" occurring in successive generations: See Appendix A.

² Entrance now is 121, Buccleugh Street

³ Wrongly entered in the St Cuthbert's register as "John."

⁴ In the presence of the usual witnesses.

into the room as his mother was dying and, to the astonishment of all, offering up a prayer remarkable for its appropriateness and fervour.”¹ So then, died Ann Crumbie in her forty-seventh year, having been married just twenty years. The author has spent many fruitless hours endeavouring to find her burying place. It seems probable that she was buried in the Greyfriars burying ground, where Alexander was to join her thirty-seven years later.

With the passing of Ann Crumbie ends the first phase of Alexander’s life. After two years, he married again. In the St. Cuthbert’s marriage register² under date, June 4th, 1792, is found the following entry, “Thomson, Alexander Wright in Giffords Park, and Isabella Couper, Residenter in Cross Causeway, daughter of the late Andrew Couper, indweller in the parish of Inveresk, gave up their names for Proclamation of Banns Matrimonial.” Following his marriage, occurred an important event. Alexander became a freeman of the City.³ The entry in the Burgess book is as follows:—“11th April, 1793, Alexander Thomson,

¹ “Sermon on the Death of the Rev. Alexander Thomson,” by the Rev. D. Arthur—with a Memoir; Aberdeen, 1853.

² 685/2

¹⁷

³ The books of the Canongate Burgh of which Alexander was, of course, free, are in an appalling condition, and the date of his freedom cannot be ascertained.

wright, compearing, is made burgess of this City, in virtue of an act of the Town Council made anent the admission of unfreemen ; and he paid his dues and made oath as use is.” Almost immediately after this enablement, the new couple must have moved to the New Town, as the only child born to them, Margaret, was baptised in the parish of Edinburgh, on 9th September, 1793, the parents being stated to be living in St. Andrew Kirk parish.

In 1796, Alexander bought from James Wilkie, the builder, No. 164, Rose Street, in the New Town, and here he and his wife lived until his death. The household at first consisted of Alexander and his wife, young Alexander and James, the two girls Marion and Christian, and the child Margaret. Elizabeth had distinguished herself by marrying William Blair, tronman in the Tolbooth parish, on June 5th, 1794, and disappears thenceforth from all knowledge. John and Agnes were dead. On 14th June, 1798, Marion married Robert Napier, of Princes Street. It should be noted in passing, for those having no knowledge of Edinburgh’s history, that the present Princes Street was not intended at the time of the New Town’s construction to be a street of shops, and was, in the early days, purely residential. In 1797, Margaret Cooper,

sister of Mrs. Isobel, had acquired No. 162, Rose Street.¹ In the same year George Thomson died at Corstorphine, in his seventy-seventh year. No will is on record.

In 1798, Alexander became a member of the United Incorporations of St. Mary's Chapel² In the Minutes for 10th September, 1798, there appears the following passage, "Alexander Thomson, wright, and Nicol Somervell, painter, having perfected their essays, were admitted Freemen of the said respective arts—they took the Oath of Admission and subscribed the approbation of the bond granted to the Trades' Maiden Hospital³ for four hundred marks."

After Marion's marriage, there remained at home Alexander, James, Christian and Margaret. The year 1798 saw the extraordinary movement in the religious history of Scotland, initiated by the Haldane brothers, and pushed mightily forward by the visit of Rowland Hill to Edinburgh; it was a movement which was destined to shape the course of young Alexander's life, and that of his son and grandson. For a hundred and twenty years from this date, the head of the family

¹ In 1812, this house was conveyed to Margaret's niece, her namesake, and Alexander's only child by Isobel Cooper.

² The incorporation dates from 1475. The chapel in Niddry's Wind is a stone's throw from the private school Ferguson attended.

³ See Shepherds' Views.

was to be a member of the Congregational body, and for a hundred and thirty-five years, three consecutive generations were represented in that Ministry.¹ In 1800,² young Alexander applied to Robert Haldane to be received as a student for the ministry. On acceptance, he left home for his studies at Dundee and Glasgow.³ James remained at home for a few more years, and then settled at 38, and later at 40, Rose Street.

By 1815, year of stirring memory, Alexander's life work was done.⁴ He had seen, and had helped to make, the great change in the northern capital. No longer was the High Street the fashionable, filthy, and only rendezvous of all classes. The cry of "Gardy loo" no longer rang in the ears of lords and ladies returning from the Assembly to mount the common stair to their rooms in High Street closes. The social centre had shifted to the New Town. The Barony of Broughton was now the city's wealthy residential quarter, and, to the ignorant tourist was soon to be the only Edinburgh.

On the 27th February, 1827, Alexander bought the

¹ A total *pastorate* of 147 years.

² This was the year of termination of his apprenticeship to his father.

³ "A Historic Survey of Congregationalism in Scotland," by Robert Kinniburgh, Cong. Jub. Services, 1849.

⁴ He probably *retired* in 1824 as after 1823/24, his name does not appear in the Edinburgh Directories.

top half of No. 118, Princes Street from Alexander Youngson, W.S., for £230.¹ This house was built by his old partner John Crumbie, who acquired the ground from the town in 1788. On the same day, he and Isobel drew up their will. On the 27th December of the same year, Alexander died. On the 31st December he was buried in the Greyfriars burying ground.² His original will is extant among the titles of 118, Princes Street, and the facsimile signature at the foot of the chapter is taken therefrom. Neither the will³ nor inventory is of much interest. Christian, Margaret and her mother continued to live at Rose Street, until, in 1836, Margaret married John Crawford, coal merchant and bailie of the city.⁴ On the death of her mother, Margaret became possessed of 164, Rose Street, and 118, Princes Street where she and her husband lived, was already hers. As mentioned above, 162, Rose Street passed to her from her maternal aunt in 1812. The Crawfords had no children, but a good deal of this world's goods. John Radford Thomson used to visit them when in Edinburgh. They are

¹ Crumbie and Alexander built the house : the ground floor is now Gieves' shop. Messrs. Davidson & Syme, W. S., hold the titles for M. R., Esq.

² "4½ double paces east the Causeway opposite big tree"—Cemetery Book in the City Chambers.

³ Edr. Commt. Regr., vol. 152, 29th January, 1828.

⁴ Marriage contract date 2nd June, 1836 : see also Notarial Instrument in favour of trustees of above in G.R.S., 11th June, 1877. Trust Disp'n. registered in Books of Council and Session, 19th October, 1877 : and Disp'n. by original to Testy. Trustees, G.R.S., 28th April, 1883.

buried in St. Cuthbert's, where on the south side, against the church, appears this inscription: "Erected by John Crawford, merchant, in memory of Margaret Thomson, his wife, who died 14th October, 1877; also Jane McLellan, who died 12th December, 1850; and Marian Thomson, wife of James Napier,¹ who died 4th March, 1856; also the above John Crawford, who died 26th April, 1887."

A word in conclusion to give the setting of the Edinburgh picture. Besides the period covered above being one of great physical change in the Northern Capital, it was the period of Scotland's romantic revival. To Scott's many activities, it is needless to refer. Largely through them the romance of Scotland's past was made real to an uncaring England, and to a Scotland dulled by the tide of commercialism following in the wake of the Union.

Auld Reekie must be known well to be loved; if loved well, she gives a warm and rich setting to the life of her meanest caddie. During Alexander's time the social life of Edinburgh was a very full one. Scott, Raeburn, Burns and Brodie, to mention but a short (and varied!) list, were among his contemporaries. The Deacon he knew well, who didn't? and he was

¹ There is reason to suppose that Crawford and Napier were business partners.

present at the memorable execution. Poor Fergusson he may have met in some reeking tavern just before his death. Raeburn, Alexander must often have passed in George Street.¹ What a more than pity no portrait of him by the master's hand has come to us.

The visit of George IV. in 1822, when Scott acted as master of ceremonies, was the last occasion for Edinburgh to show a flare of regal glory. Romance, however, does not die with the end of spectacular pomp, and Scotland now has more reason than ever to show pride in her ancient capital.

Alexander Thomson

¹ It is not known whether Alexander knew Raeburn personally. It seems probable. A portrait of Alexander was destroyed in the Chatham fire (see below); the artist is unknown.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REV. ALEXANDER THOMSON
AND HIS FAMILY.

LEXANDER THOMSON, elder surviving son of Alexander Thomson and Ann Crumbie, was born at Burrow Loch, Edinburgh, on the 3rd May, 1781, and was baptised at St. Cuthbert's Church, on the 10th of the same month. Of his early piety a striking instance has already been furnished. He was brought up in the Church of Scotland, attended the Tolbooth Church, and at the age of sixteen "was admitted to the communion of the Lord's Supper by Dr. Davidson."¹ As we have already mentioned, the year 1798 saw the birth of Congregationalism in Scotland. The Circus was converted into a place of religious worship, and a church was formed there upon congregational principles, under the pastorsehip of Mr. J. Haldane,² whither thousands

¹ "Sermon . . . on the death of the Rev. Alexander Thomson . . ." by The Rev. David Arthur, Aberdeen, 1853.

² In all, the brothers Haldane spent close on £100,000 in their activities for the congregational churches.

flocked to listen to the preaching of the Gospel, "which was delivered with wonderful freedom, unction and success."¹ The ardent spirit of Alexander Thomson was captivated by this religious movement, and he became a member of the Circus Church before the end of the year.

Alexander soon became an enthusiast, and he was one of a number of young men of the congregation who used to go out on Sunday evenings to Cramond, Liberton, and neighbouring villages, to take Sabbath School. In 1799, he decided to enter the ministry. This did not at first meet with the approval of his father, and it was not until some years later that Alexander, who remained a member of the Established Church until his death twenty-eight years later, became fully reconciled to the step his son had taken.

Alexander, the younger, however, joined the second training class, which commenced in January, 1800, at Dundee, under Mr. Innes, who had gone thither to supply with ministerial services the Tabernacle, which was then building; and which was opened, as a place of worship, on the 19th October of that year. In the early part of 1801, this class was removed to Glasgow,

¹ "Sermon . . . on the death of the Rev. Alexander Thomson . . ." by the Rev. David Arthur, Aberdeen, 1853.

and was under Mr. Ewing for fifteen months.¹ At the expiration of Alexander's studies at Glasgow, he was sent to preach at Fortforge, in Northumberland, where he remained about a year until his removal to Lochee, where Mr. Haldane purchased a chapel formerly used by the Burgher denomination. On the 8th June, Alexander was ordained Pastor of the new church, over which he was to preside for the next seventeen years.

On 23rd November, 1803, Alexander married at Edinburgh, Ann, daughter to Patrick MacLellan, factor of the New Hailes estate, and Ann Jameson his wife. Patrick MacLellan was descended from Thomas, brother to James MacLellan of Balmangan, who died in 1637.²

At Lochee, were born all Alexander's children; Alexander a boy who died young, Patrick born 2nd March, 1808, Isabella born 22nd November, 1810, Jean born 1816, Ann born 1818, and Margaret born 1819. In 1820, he accepted the call of the church at Aberdeen, where he was to labour until his death.

For an account of Alexander Thomson's ministry

¹ Historic Survey, etc., in "Scottish Congregational Jubilee Services," pub. by Fullarton, 1849.

² He was thus fifth cousin to Camden Gray MacLellan, ninth Lord Kirkcudbright, and his heir male (if existant) could establish a claim to the Barony now dormant. See the "Scots' Peerage." Ann was born in Edinburgh 5th October, 1776.

in Aberdeen, the reader should consult the “Centenary Memorials of the First Congregational Church in Aberdeen.”¹

Of his life, here we may let the memorialist speak. He says as follows : “ The same good qualities, however, that had endeared Mr. Thomson to his former flock aided him greatly in filling up, in his new sphere, the ranks that had been . . . sorely depleted, and in gaining him an extraordinary hold on the affections of his people. His benign countenance was itself a means of grace ; his whole attitude of transparency and simple-mindedness won him the confidence of all. His was the first face in a pulpit to impress itself on my own consciousness. I understood nothing, but I *knew* that the man I saw there, preaching with black gloves on outstretched hands, was in earnest about something, sometimes even tearfully so, and that he was good and guileless. His favourite appeal was to ‘ people of rightly constituted minds.’ In the management of affairs, Mr. Thomson could adopt a tone of firmness and resolution that bespoke convictions from which he could not be lightly driven. How characteristic is the following, ‘ Brother Prolicks, you will please pray, but *be brief!* ’ ”

¹ By John Bulloch, Aberdeen, 1898.



yours truly
Alexⁿ Thomson

" He was an excellent visitor among his people, and was always welcome. He made a point, as often as possible, to be present at the choir practisings, which he enjoyed. The usual finale to these meetings was, ' Well, Mr. Thomson, what would you like for a closing hymn ? ' His almost invariable reply was, ' Crown Him, Crown Him ; ' his favourite hymn. An incident is related, illustrative of his sensitive concern for the comfort of his people. In 1829, the method of lighting the chapel was changed from candles and lamps to gas. Mr. Thomson, on the first occasion of using the new illuminant, was afraid, not that the jets would

‘ Start into light,
And make the lighter start ! ’

but that the people might become needlessly alarmed at the sudden and unaccustomed blaze when the tap was turned. So he thought it right, before that operation, to calm their fears, and to advise them not to be in the least alarmed. As it happened, Sandy Paul, the beadle, in place of screwing on the gas, in his nervousness screwed it off. Instead of alarming light there was more alarming darkness.

" One who was an occasional hearer tells me that she liked to hear him preach, ' for he aye preached us a' into Heaven.' It may truly be said of Mr.

Thomson that he was popular without aiming at popularity."¹

The family in Aberdeen soon became reduced in numbers. Little Alexander was already dead, Patrick took his M.A. at Aberdeen University in 1827, six months before his grandfather's death in Edinburgh, and left for Highbury College, London, to study for the Ministry. On several occasions he returned to Aberdeen to give temporary help to his father.² Isabella married John Cruickshank, engineer in Aberdeen; one of their four daughters married Alexander Souter: Professor Alexander Souter, D.D., of Aberdeen University, and William Clark Souter, M.D., are among their children. Ann, third daughter, married William Taylor, a banker in Worcester; their daughter Ann married William May Phelps, nephew and biographer of the tragedian. Margaret, youngest daughter, married John Davidson, of Aberdeen; one of their daughters, Agnes, married Alexander Morrison, who died in 1918. Jean, second and only unmarried daughter, lived with her parents at 57, Gerrard Street, at that time a pleasant manse, now an isolated house in a dingy street.

¹ Alexander only went to press once when he published a sermon delivered on 2nd June, 1822, on the occasion of the execution of William Gordon and Robert McIntosh for murder. The text was from 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10-13.

² The visits were exchanged, father visiting son twice during his ministry at Chatham.

In 1841, David Arthur was ordained co-pastor with Alexander "whose increasing years and bodily infirmities" disabled him from performing his duties so effectively as before.¹ The co-pastorate was a great success, and the two worked in the most pleasant harmony until Alexander's death. Mr. Arthur became much interested in the revival movement of the fifties, and most willingly gave such men as Duncan Mathieson, Brownlow North, Grant of Arndilly, and Lord Kintore, all the encouragement that free access to church and pulpit could give.

On 13th February, 1853, Alexander Thomson died in his seventy-second year, and was buried in the Spital burying ground, Aberdeen, where the inscriptions over his family's vault may yet be deciphered. His will, recorded in the Commissary Court Books of Aberdeen on 2nd April, 1853, is remarkable only for the pious expressions it contains. His portrait, here reproduced, was painted by James Cassie, and a mezzotint, published in August, 1848, by J. & J. Hay, Print-sellers to the Queen, commanded a great sale.² Ann lived on to the ripe age of 84, and was buried in 1863. Jean died in 1877, and was buried with her parents.

¹ "Centenary Memorials," quoted above.

² Engraved by J. Moffat, Edinburgh, and printed by A. M. Glashon.

To obtain a fair estimate of Alexander's character, very full allowances must be made for the religious circumstances of his time. Commerce and theology were the battle grounds of the early nineteenth century Scot, and in the second of these Alexander showed great originality in early life, and later, a high degree of mental courage in the course of various religious differences which were then real enough, although they seem tedious and trivial to us to-day. A good conception of the atmosphere in which he lived can be obtained from a perusal of his funeral sermon, preached by his successor, the Rev. David Arthur.¹ An appendix to this publication gives a rather full account of his religious activities. The concluding paragraph of this memoir, characteristic of father and son, needs no comment :—

" Few were more sensitive to the sorrows of others, or more desirous to alleviate their distresses. He was bland and affable in his intercourse, and displayed much of 'the milk of human kindness.' Punctuality and order characterised all his movements, and by his consistency and benevolence he won the respect and affection of all. May we follow him so far as he followed Christ, and meet him in that world 'into which no foe shall ever enter, and from which no friend shall ever depart ! ' "

¹ "Funeral Sermon," quoted above.



CHAPTER V.

THE REV. PATRICK THOMSON.



PATRICK,¹ second and only surviving son of the Rev. Alexander Thomson, was born at Lochee, a prosperous manufacturing village two miles from Dundee, on March 2nd, 1808. Very early in life he became addicted to habits of piety, and before he was ten years old it seemed a foregone conclusion that he was to follow his father's footsteps in the ministry. He was a studious child, and in later years related to his children the eager pleasure with which he carried home the five massive volumes of a quarto edition of Mathew Henry's Commentary which his father had purchased at a sale.²

In 1820 the family, as has already been related, moved to Aberdeen, and two years later, at the age of fourteen, Patrick entered Marischall College. At the

¹ Tenth in descent from Alexander Thomson first of Corstorphine: he was named after his maternal grandfather, Patrick MacLellan.

² "Sermons by the late Rev. Patrick Thomson, M.A.," edited, and prefaced with a brief Memoir, by J. Radford Thomson, M.A.; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1872.

age of eighteen he graduated Master of Arts, at which time he was said to have a “perfect knowledge of the Latin tongue”!¹ In 1827, he was admitted a theological student of Highbury College, London, whither he always journeyed by sea. Patrick remained at Highbury College for two years, having returned home several times to help his father and fill his pulpit, on occasions which appear to have been much appreciated.²

In 1830, Patrick settled at Liverpool, and began his ministry at Newington Chapel. We are told that “the early days of the week were largely spent in writing his sermons, and the last days in the Scottish practice of ‘mandating’ or committing to memory what had been already written.”³ This laborious method of preparation he continued for many years; but his memory acquired such readiness and retentiveness that he was at length able to preach almost *verbatim* a discourse which he had read through once only after it had been written. In 1832, he married Alice, youngest daughter of Richard Gregson, of Liverpool,⁴ by his second wife Alice, neé Walker, widow of Edward

¹ These are not the words of the graduation certificate which is dated August 21, 1827, and is in Latin. Patrick was a proficient Greek scholar: *vide* “Sermons.”

² “Centenary Memorials” quoted above.

³ Sermons.

⁴ Richard Gregson, 1757-1830, was eldest son of Thomas Gregson of Longworth and Hannah Pilkington: see Appendix C.



Thorn (who had died at the age of 21 leaving her with a son Edward¹).

After a short period at Edmonton, Patrick was invited in 1834 to become co-pastor with the venerable Joseph Slatterie, of Chatham, known in the Independent body as "the Apostle of Kent." After the death of Mr. Slatterie in 1838, his colleague succeeded to the sole pastorate. For twenty years his career here was one of great and scarcely interrupted prosperity. It was at Chatham that all his children were born, four boys and four girls. The congregation at Chatham was large and enthusiastic, and possessed several offshoots in the neighbouring villages. Here Patrick refused to pay Church rates, and "more than once submitted to the most cruel spoliation of his goods."² His attitude was largely responsible for the final abolition of Church rates in the town.

In politics he was a strong Radical, and attended the Manchester Conference of the Anti-Corn-Law League. His son well remembered the delight he manifested upon receiving news that Sir Robert Peel had carried his great Free Trade measure. "It can be said of him," writes the author of his Memoir,³

¹ This Edward Thorn married Sarah, d. of Nathaniel Lassell and Hannah, sister to Richard Gregson: Sarah married, secondly, Thomas Gregson, son of Richard Gregson and Ann Lassell his first wife.

² Sermons.

³ *Ibid.*

" . . . that all the great measures of the last forty years which have contributed to the popular enlightenment, freedom, and well-being, had his sympathy and support in the time of their disfavour, as well as his approbation when their justice and expediency came to be unquestioned it need scarcely be said that in his opinions both upon Church and State Mr. Thomson was, as a Scot and a Dissenter, altogether free from those Boetian superstitions which still prevail largely among the highest and lowest social strata of the English population."

Towards the close of his residence in Chatham his youngest daughter, Mary Walker, "a sweet child of seven years," died. Soon afterwards Alexander was called to his reward, and Patrick travelled to Aberdeen to attend the funeral.

In 1854, began a most unsettled period in Patrick's life. He accepted an invitation from Grosvenor Street Chapel, Manchester, to undertake the pastorate in succession to the Rev. Richard Fletcher, who had gone to Australia to guide the progress of Congregationalism in the flourishing Colony of Victoria. During his pastorate at Manchester there seemed to have been a great many dissensions in the affairs of the church. There was, however, the time and opportunity for a

good deal of study, and incidentally, for the publication of some nine sermons. In 1863, Charlie, third son, died in Australia at the age of 21. He was a young man of great promise and some literary ability. His special bent was a critical study of historians such as Gibbon, Grote, and Buckle, and had he lived to maturity, it seemed probable that he would make his mark in the field of historical research. He was a keen traveller, and was fond of painting, music and poetry.

In 1865, Patrick moved to Bristol, where he had accepted the pastorate of the ancient church assembling at Castle Green. From this he resigned after an arduous and anxious period of two years, and thence acceded to the request of many friends to revive an Independent congregation at Leominster, in Herefordshire. The society here had all but become extinct; but a very pretty new Gothic church had been erected, and a few families rallied round the movement. Just at this crisis it was important to secure the ministry of a man of established reputation, and his settlement was hailed by those interested in the cause of Congregationalism in the neighbourhood, as a happy omen of prosperity. In this somewhat remote and lonely position he laboured for two years; but having been accustomed to large towns, he felt painfully the isolation

of his position, and the inaccessibility of books and other advantages. During his residence in Leominster, Ann married J. R. Turner, Esq., of Stoke Bishop, and Alice Gregson, the younger surviving daughter, married Samuel Haywood Blackmore of the Inner Temple, and Eardisland, co. Hereford. The three surviving sons, John Radford (the eldest and the subject of the following chapter), Alexander, and William Bell, being already scattered, his hearth was left childless. This circumstance, added to the disadvantages of the locality, tended to create within his mind a dissatisfaction with his position, and he resigned his pastorate. He left, however, a happy memento of his ministry in a sum of money, chiefly collected from personal friends, and contributed to purchase a suitable site for a Sunday School. In the last letter written to his eldest son, penned only five days before his death, he said, “I have had a letter this morning informing me that the purchase of the cottage and garden adjoining the Leominster Church, has at length been completed. If a suitable schoolroom is erected, I shall feel as if I had not gone to Leominster in vain.”

In the winter of 1870-71, Patrick took severe colds, and his health began to fail. This winter he spent partly in London and partly at Tunbridge Wells. In

the spring of 1871 a vacancy occurred in the pastorate of the Vines Congregational Church at Rochester, an offshoot from his former church at Chatham. Mr. Thomson's name was a household word in this locality ; his visits to Chatham and Rochester had been for years occasions for the demonstration of the strongest feelings of attachment and esteem. It seemed most natural that he should be solicited to return to the scene of much personal happiness and ministerial prosperity. The church at Rochester was not so large, it was thought, as to overtax his strength ; and he accepted an invitation to settle among the people as their pastor. The feeling attending this step was honourable to both parties. He hoped that years of tranquil labour in a congenial sphere were yet in reserve for him, and the people looked forward to a well-filled sanctuary, to intimate and loving relationship, and to happy spiritual results. Since leaving Manchester he had been tossed to and fro upon the waves of life : now, as it seemed to his friends and himself, he had surely reached his final earthly haven.

And so it proved to be ; but not in the way fondly hoped by himself and by those who loved him. He went to Rochester to excite the expectations and to renew the affection of his friends in that neighbourhood,

and then to leave them, and at the same time to quit the scene of earthly service. Such was the love of his people that they said :—“ If our pastor has come hither only to die amongst us, still we are glad and grateful that he has come.” He preached but few Sundays. His sufferings and weakness increasing, he was laid aside from active labour. He was unable—greatly to his own disappointment—to attend the meetings of the County Association held at Folkestone in July, and the more so because his eldest son had been that year selected to preach the customary annual sermon before the Assembly.

A change of air having brought no improvement, Mr. and Mrs. Thomson returned to Rochester. Their garden ran up to the wall of the grand old Norman keep, and he loved to look out upon the grey and ivied walls of the old fortress ; when able he would slowly walk to a favourite point of view very near home, and enjoy the prospect over the Medway, watch the red-sailed barges drop down with the tide, or scan the horizon with the familiar spire, the windmills and the wooded slopes.

During the autumn all his children visited him : those who were near came frequently. He was happy to have a son or daughter by his side ; his face beamed

with smiles when they arrived, and he was loth to part with them. As far as his strength permitted he would read, or listen whilst a book was read aloud. The last book which was read to him was the latest work of Mr. Froude, an author whom he greatly admired and enjoyed. On Sunday, 5th November, 1871, he insisted upon attending Divine Service; he remained to the Lord's Supper, and at its close pronounced the Benediction in his own clear, strong, melodious voice, so that a stranger hearing him might have thought he was listening to an orator in the fulness of his strength, the glory of his prime!¹ This was his last public act. The day was intensely cold, and a chill supervened, from the effects of which he did not rally. On the following Wednesday he breathed his last. He was buried, in the presence of some five hundred friends, in St. Nicholas's Cemetery, and several funeral sermons were preached during the month following.

Patrick Thomson's theological views were defined and fixed. He was an unusually thorough student and master, and an unwavering adherent of the evangelical theology. His sympathies were with the more liberal and general writers of the modern Scottish school, especially Chalmers and Wardlaw, whom he regarded

¹ This is taken verbatim from the Memoir referred to above as is much of the previous material. A list of his works is given on p. 32 thereof.

in a sense, as his masters in the science of divinity. We are told that he was scarcely able to understand the importance attached by many modern writers to the human consciousness as an authoritative source of religious teaching. His sermons were said to be direct, dignified, and oratorical, and seldom took less than three-quarters of an hour in delivery. He had been in his early manhood a great reader and student of the choicest models of pulpit eloquence, and was familiar with the standard sermons of Scottish, English, French, and American divines. "He was not unnaturally somewhat impatient with that impatience of sermons which is characteristic of many, and of some besides the supercilious, in this generation ; he attributed it to the indolent, vapid, and powerless style of preaching too prevalent, especially in our State-church pulpits."¹ In character he was stern, though kindly and lovable. He is said to have remarked on more than one occasion that he was not conscious of having committed a sin. By this it is presumed that he never felt the inclination to transgress his own ethical code. On first hearing, the remark would seem an extraordinary one, but a close study of his life and sermons leads one to the conclusion that it was a natural and reasonable

¹ He was fond of modern poetry, and was a warm and discriminating admirer of the Italian schools of painting.

statement, and that he did not mean to claim any great virtue therein. Another apparently remarkable circumstance was that he never, in all his life, entered a shop! His hobbies were mostly connected with reading and books, he was a good skater, an excellent horseman, and a good walker, both physically, and in the appreciation of the manifold beauties of his surroundings

CHAPTER VI.

THE REV. PROFESSOR JOHN RADFORD
THOMSON AND HIS FAMILY.



JOHN RADFORD, the eldest son of the Rev. Patrick Thomson, was born at Chatham on January 8th, 1835, and began his education at a private school at the age of seven. His first startling experience of life was being carried at night from the fire at his father's house, in which many important heirlooms, family papers, and pictures were lost—much to the detriment of the present work.

At the early age of 15 he was "received" at his father's Church, at 16 he matriculated at the University of London, being placed in the first Division, and before he had turned 17, he was accepted as a student for the ministry at New College, London. In his eighteenth year he had begun to preach, as he said, "with fear and trembling." A quick and diligent student, he gained two scholarships while at New College, and in 1857 graduated Master of Arts at the

University of London, taking first place in Philosophy and Economics, and gaining the coveted Gold Medal for the exceptional brilliancy of his papers. Meanwhile during one of his vacations in 1855 he went on his first Continental tour, and while climbing in the Alps with some college friends in North Italy, nearly lost his life by missing his step and sliding some 150 feet down a glacier towards a precipice edge.

During the winter of 1856-7 he went to Edinburgh for a supplementary year's study in Theology and Philosophy, and had the good fortune to hear Thackeray deliver his lectures on the "Four Georges" (first delivered in America in 1855), and meet him at a dinner given in his honour. His ministry, the third of the remarkable family series, commenced in 1857, when, between the ages of 21 and 22, he went to East Parade, Leeds, to be colleague to the Rev. Henry Robert Reynolds, subsequently principal of Cheshunt College, at that time a Training College for the ministry of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection. He described his ministry there as "a position very congenial, happy and stimulating," and the close friendship with his senior there, continued throughout life. From Leeds he moved for a short time into Lancashire to be in charge of a church at Heywood, a manufacturing

town near Manchester. While there he helped Dr. Joseph Parker,—in later years the famous minister of the City Temple, London,—and Dr. Paton, to found Cavendish College, which soon afterwards became Nottingham College, for the training of men for the Congregational ministry. His work in Lancashire and Yorkshire gave him a profound respect for these warm-hearted, strong, and outspoken people, of whom he often spoke as being “the backbone of England.”

In 1863, at the age of 28, he was offered and accepted the charge of the Mount Pleasant Congregational Church, at Tunbridge Wells, where he remained as pastor until 1882, a period of no less than nineteen years. A year after coming to Tunbridge Wells he married Annie Alice, daughter of John Chawner, a Leicester manufacturer, a marriage which proved to be a most happy one, his wife helping him most effectively in both his life and work. His pastoral activities in his new sphere of labour were very strenuous and varied. There were few public movements, social, educational, and evangelistic, in which he did not take a prominent part. Besides restoring the church, he was instrumental in founding five daughter churches in the surrounding villages, an entirely new development of church life for the Mount Pleasant congregation,

and the outcome of an interest he had inherited from his father. In 1872 he added to his already heavy task the Chair of Philosophy at New College, Hampstead, where he himself had been trained, and he used to go up to London twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, to deliver lectures. In addition to preaching and lecturing, he was never satisfied unless he had managed to pay at least twenty pastoral visits in the course of the week, and with him this was not simply to pay social calls, for he rarely left a house without having first gathered together the members of the household and offered prayer for a blessing on them.

On being offered in 1882 the Chair of Philosophy and English at Hackney College, which had been removed to West Hampstead, he decided to resign his pastoral charge and remove to London in order that he might be near his work at the Colleges, and have the necessary leisure for study. Accordingly he leased a house at Acton, in the far west of London, but close to the North London Railway, by which he could easily reach the Colleges. He was very reluctant to leave Tunbridge Wells, where he had built up a large and loyal congregation, which was most devoted to its pastor, but he felt that in teaching he could do the work for which he had special gifts. On Wednesdays



and Fridays he now used to lecture at Hackney College, whose Principal at that time was Dr. Alfred Cave.

In 1887, Professor Thomson had been offered the Pastorate of Augustine Church, Edinburgh, in succession to the well-known and greatly loved Dr. Lindsay Alexander, but after two visits to Edinburgh, when he preached at the Church and came into close touch with the members of the congregation, he decided to refuse the call, feeling that it lacked the unanimity which he considered, under the circumstances, to be essential. Edinburgh had many attractions for him, but it is doubtful if the cold climate would have suited either his somewhat delicate wife or his children.

Two other offers he refused, the Principalship of Airedale College, Yorkshire, and the Chair of Philosophy at Cheshunt College.

His removal from Kent involved his severing his connection with many organisations in which he had taken a leading part. For some years he had been Secretary of the Kent Congregational Association, also of the Kent Union Society, and a Manager of the Debt Extinction Fund, which he inaugurated. In London already at this time he had been Professor at New College, Dean of Faculty at New College, Secretary to

the College Special Library Fund, a Member of the Colleges Reform Committee, and of the Southern Board of Education, Registrar of the Senatus Academicus, a Director of the London Missionary Society, on the Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, on the Council of the Liberation Society, on the Committee of the Memorial Hall, a manager of Milton Mount College, at which two of his daughters were educated, on the Committee of the English Church Building Society, a Trustee of the Christian Witness Fund, and Examiner to several Colleges, including Cheshunt, Nottingham, Brecon and Aberystrwyth.

From Acton he moved in 1885 to North Finchley, in order to be nearer to his Colleges, and also to Mill Hill School, to which he sent all his three sons, and of which, for several years, he acted as Chaplain. Later on, he went to Upper Teddington, where his first wife died in 1893, after a long and painful illness involving many operations. Two years later he married Mary Adelaide Annie, elder daughter of Sir Henry Kimber, Bart., for many years Member of Parliament for Wandsworth, then the second largest constituency in England. Though, apart from the Chaplaincy at Mill Hill, he held no pastorate after leaving Tunbridge

Wells, he continued almost up to the time of his death to take services and preach, specially delighting in helping his old students.

After his second marriage he lived at Putney Heath. In 1903 he resigned his post on the Staff of New College, and in 1907 he gave up his work at Hackney College, feeling that he was no longer able to fulfil them to his satisfaction. During the last few years his activities were much curtailed, but he ailed little, and lived until August 16th, 1918, when he died peacefully at the ripe age of 83. He was laid to rest beside his first wife in Teddington Cemetery, amidst many tokens of sincere affection.

Professor Thomson's literary work was very varied, and, considering the exacting nature of his pastoral and educational work, his output was astonishing. Indeed, only a man of exceptional physical and mental vigour could have done all that he did. In his early days he wrote a book on the "Symbols of Christendom." For a series of "Present Day Tracts," issued by the Religious Tract Society, and intended for educated people, he wrote "The Witness of Man's Moral Nature to Christianity," "Modern Pessimism," and "Utilitarianism, an Illogical and Irreligious Theory of Morals." Of the first of these Tracts, some 60 pages

in length, written in 1883, the Rev. Prebendary Row, a recognised authority on Christian Evidence, said, "That (Tract) written by Professor Thomson is a perfect gem,—everything that it should be." Besides these Tracts, which were scholarly contributions to religious thought, Professor Thomson wrote many other lighter and more popular contributions for the Religious Tract Society, including the following :—"Henry Bazley, the Oxford Evangelist," "Jonathan Edwards, of New England," "Juan and Alfonso da Valdes, the Spanish Reformers," "Dr. Thomas Guthrie, of Edinburgh," "Dr. Marsh," "Sir Philip Sidney, the Christian Knight," "John Calvin," "Farel," and "John Wycliffe."

To the "British Quarterly" he contributed "Substitutes for Christianity," "Wiclf and his Doctrines," "George Eliot's Life as illustrating religious ideas of the time," "Evolution, Mind and Morals," and "Three Theories of Life." For the "Sunday at Home" he wrote articles on "Wiclf," and "Peter Cartwright." In addition to these and many other articles and biographical sketches he somehow found time to edit "A Dictionary of Philosophy, in the words of Philosophers, Ancient and Modern." This bulky volume was published in 1887, with an able introduction written for

the sake of beginners in philosophical studies, with a view to affording them a general survey of the field of thought before them. He also made extensive contributions to the "Pulpit Commentary."

From time to time sermons on subjects of topical interest were printed at the request of those who heard them, and two of these, one on "Intemperance," and another on "War and Peace," both preached and published in 1879, are admirable both in matter and form, and are both bold and practical. But it is worth recalling his own words, "I have never once preached a political sermon. . . . In saying this I pass no judgment upon those who have taken a different course."

He also wrote a popular "Guide to Tunbridge Wells," and another to the Craven District, a very congenial task for which his powers of quick and accurate observation, and his love for long country walks, made him exceptionally competent.

He took a leading part in the British and Foreign Bible Society (frequently going on extensive lecturing tours in various counties), and also in the Evangelical Alliance, on the Council of which he was elected in 1895. In 1887 he became a member of the National Club, and was elected to its General Committee in

1889, and subsequently to the House Committee and to the Library Committee, of which he was later Chairman. He also took a keen interest in the "Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes," and became a member of its Committee in 1887.

In politics Professor Thomson was in his younger days an ardent Liberal¹ and devoted follower of Mr. Gladstone. But, on the introduction of the Home Rule Bill of 1886, he became a stout Unionist: In 1899 he was elected a Vice-President of the Nonconformist Unionist Association, and spoke effectively at the great Meeting at Birmingham in 1889. Through this office he came into contact with Mr. (now Lord) Balfour, whom he attempted to persuade (with little result !) to desert politics for philosophy. In 1912, an article from his pen, entitled "An Appeal," appeared in the "Morning Post," and was reprinted in pamphlet form, together with contributions from two others, under the title "Nonconformity and Home Rule." As he grew older he tended, like many others, to become more and more identified with the Conservative Party, serving it with both his pen and voice, and showing a growing aversion to anything savouring of

¹ John Morley, afterwards Viscount Morley, was at one time a close friend.

Radicalism. At least until middle life, he was a keen Free-Trader, but here again, in later years tended to lose his faith in free-trade.

Amongst his many activities Professor Thomson delivered occasional lectures. One on Tennyson's *Lyrics* was illustrated with readings. His musical voice, clear articulation, and unerring sense of rythm always delighted his audience. Another, on Sir Henry Taylor's Dramas, with readings from "Philip van Artevelde," was admirable for both its substance and delivery. Few public speakers spoke with greater ease. Without in any way straining his voice he could make himself heard in the largest of buildings ; while people extremely dull of hearing could follow what he said by watching his lips. He had been fortunate in having in his College days as his teacher in elocution the old actor, Sheridan Knowles, a master in voice production. He liked to offer prizes at schools for reading, and was a most competent judge of what was good reading.

Physically, Professor Thomson was naturally strong and rarely, until the last few years of his life, suffered from illness of any sort. If any part of him gave trouble, to the amusement of his family, he would promptly disown the traitor, and declare that he himself was quite well. In height he was about five foot

eight inches, broad across the shoulders, powerful in build, and weighing in the prime of life well over thirteen stone. He had an exceptionally well-developed and broad brow, dark brown hair, which silvered in old age, clear-cut features, a fair complexion, a strong, well-shaped nose broad at its base, deep-set blue eyes, an unusually strong yet tender mouth of great mobility, and almost perfect teeth. He was an untiring walker, a strong though not fast swimmer, and a keen cyclist until he reached the age of seventy-eight. He was a real lover of nature, whom his children loved to accompany in his long country rambles, when his intimate knowledge of flowers, trees, and birds, made him a most interesting and delightful companion. His garden afforded him much pleasure, and in his younger days he would scythe his lawn with great skill and vigour.

Perhaps mentally Professor Thomson had greater gifts as a student and a compiler than he had where imagination or originality were needed. He would read, pencil in hand, with great rapidity, and retain a true and vivid recollection of what he read, especially of any connected train of thought. But like many other men of high intellectual capacity, he found names and dates difficult to remember. He had a very

extensive knowledge of Greek, Roman, and English literature, a good knowledge of French and German philosophic works, and some acquaintance with Hebrew and Italian. Although he read easily the first five languages, he was a good speaker in none save English.

His sermons were always carefully prepared, full of thought, and evangelical warmth, and in touch with life. In the morning when his congregation was usually more cultured he read from manuscript, but in the evening, when his congregation was more mixed, he preached extempore. He often used to say that he hoped in a sermon to reach at least one of his hearers, and if he had succeeded in doing this he had not preached in vain. In the course of a speech delivered in 1882 he said, "That I have passed through so much doubt has been, I hope, a qualification which has enabled me to sympathise with, and to help, my tried and tempted brethren. I do not occupy altogether the same position theologically as in my youth ; but I have had in maturer years a firmer grasp upon the facts and doctrines which I deem most central and important, whilst I have less inclination to controversy, and more sympathy with those who differ from me, than formerly." Professor Thomson was strongly evangelical, with a very real fear of the Roman Church,

and very little sympathy with the Tractarian movement, which he used to describe as being the greatest mistake of the English Church in the nineteenth century. The famous Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, a staunch friend of his, he spoke of as being "a high churchman." But he was often heard to say that he considered Cardinal Newman, profoundly as he disagreed with him, to be "the greatest Englishman of the last century." He was very anxious for union amongst the Free Churches, and took an active part in the work of the Home Reunion Society, attending a Conference between representatives of the Church of England and the Free Churches. In spite of his strong evangelical views, he numbered amongst his warm friends men like Charles Gore, afterwards the Bishop of Worcester, and then the first Bishop of Birmingham, Bishop Talbot, the late Bishop of Winchester, and Bishop Wescott of Durham, men whom he first met in connection with the reunion movement.

As regards his character, those who knew him best would dwell upon his unfailing cheerfulness, unselfishness, patience and courtesy. He had in a very high degree the happy knack of making friends wherever he went, and what helped to keep him young to the end of his life was his faculty of making and keeping the

friendship of young people. His estimate of others was always charitable ; he rarely found fault unless he considered it to be his duty to do so:

The posthumous testimony of two old friends and colleagues may be given in final illustration of his character. "His kind heart and genial nature won friendship. His influence on the students was uplifting, and wise in guidance and example, and I think many of them will be profiting by it. He was a Christian scholar of high tone and wide sympathies. . . . He was one who was loved by whomever he came in contact with."

By his first wife Professor Thomson had six children—three daughters followed by three sons—Beatrice Lucy, born in 1865, Letice Mary, born in 1866, and Mildred, born in the same year, Clement Reynolds, born in 1870, Alexander Patrick Bruce, born in 1874, and Bernard Hilary, born in 1875. The second son, Bruce, was drowned, at the age of 16, when bathing off the coast of the Isle of Wight. All three daughters inherited their father's gift of teaching, while from her mother the second daughter, Letice, inherited considerable artistic ability, and the third daughter, Mildred, considerable musical talent. Mil-

dred, after an exceptionally distinguished career at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, where she gained a brilliant first-class in English, became second mistress at the King Edward Camp Hill School at Birmingham, and remained there until her retirement.

The eldest son, the present representative of the family, Clement, graduated with Honours in Classics at Trinity College, Oxford, took his B.A. at the University of London, and an *ad eundem* M.A. at the Cape University. He was ordained to the Ministry of the Church, and for many years taught at St. John's College, Johannesburg, of which School he became Headmaster. Subsequently he returned to England and became Vicar of Ruabon, in the St. Asaph Diocese of the Church in Wales. He married in 1921 Agnes Jean, daughter of J. C. Stone, Esq., of Braunstone, co. Leicester. Bernard, the third son, served in the Mercantile Service, fought through the Boer War in Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, and was wounded, and finally settled in California.

By his second wife, Professor Thomson had one son, Theodore Radford, born in 1897. He was educated at Epsom College, and at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he graduated M.A., M.B., and

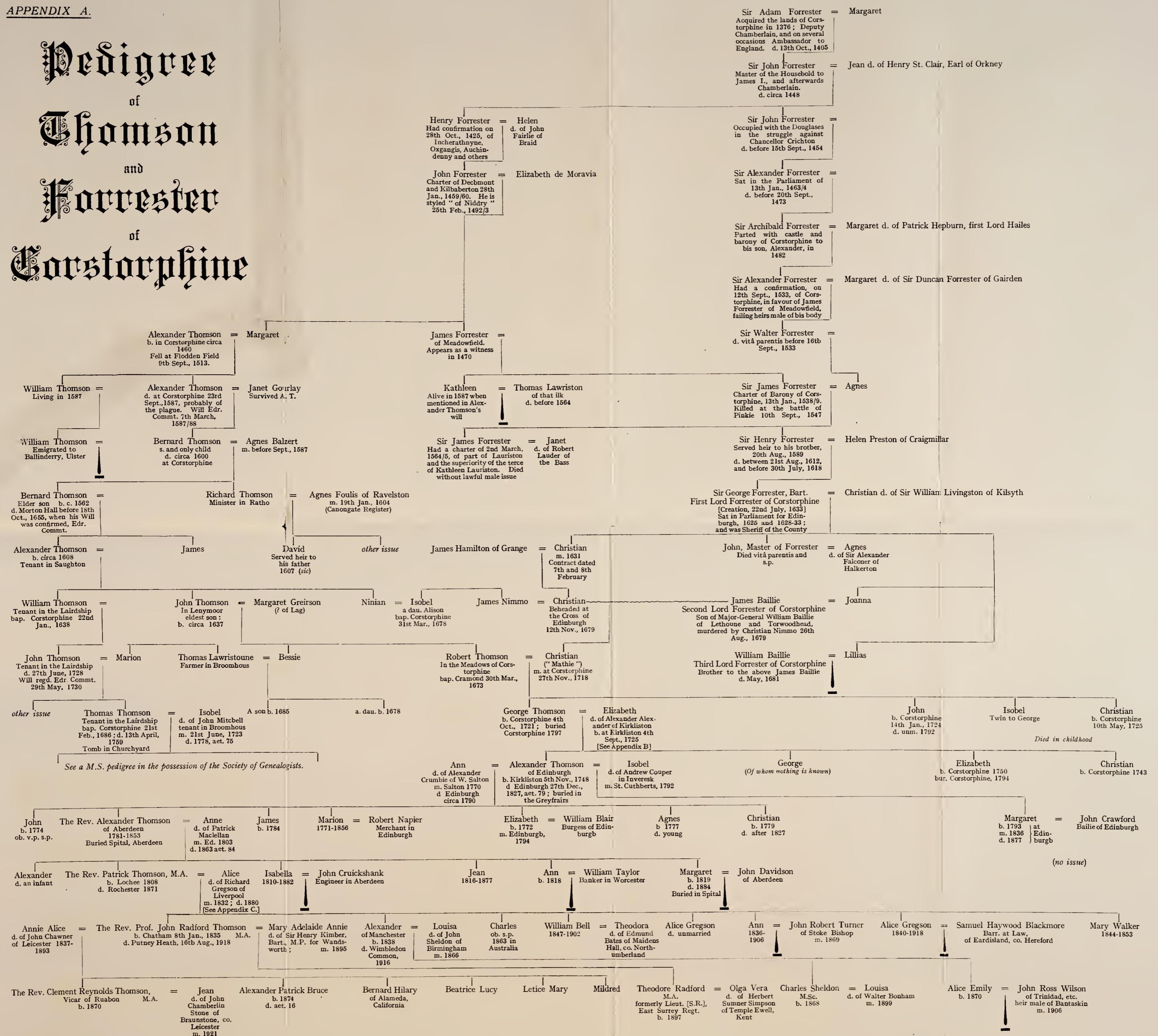
B.Ch. He served in the East Surrey Regiment through the Great War, and was placed on the retired list on account of wounds received in France in 1916. During the remainder of the war he occupied a position in the Foreign Office. In 1921, he married Olga Vera, daughter of H. S. Simpson, Esq., of Temple Ewell.

CHAPTER VII.

ADDENDUM.

APPENDIX A.

Pedigree of Thomson and Forrester of Corstorphine



APPENDIX B.

Royal Descent.

Notes of Appendix B.

Robert II., King of Scotland, 1371-1390, was son of Walter, sixth High Steward and Marjory Bruce, his wife, who was fourth in descent from Robert de Brus, Lord of Annandale, who married Isobel, daughter of (Prince) Henry of Huntingdon (ninth in descent from Kenneth MacAlpin, King of Scots, 844-859), and Adeline, his wife, great grand-daughter of William the Conqueror, she being daughter of William de Warenne, second Earl of Surrey. Further, it should be noted that Henry of Huntingdon's grandmother, Margaret (wife of Malcolm Canmore), was daughter of Edward the Aetheling, son of Edmund Ironside, son of Aethelred II., son of Eadgar, son of Edmund, son of Edward the Ealder, son of Alfred the Great.

Authorities for Appendix B.

" MacDonald of the Isles," by A.M.W., Stirling, 1913; Hay's "Vindication of Elizabeth More," Edr. 1723; Gordon's "Dissertation concerning the marriage of Robert II. with Elizabeth More," Edr. 1759; Skene's "Celtic Scotland"; Gregory's "Highlands and Isles" and "History of Clan Donald"; Rev. Chas. Roger's "Memorials of the Earl of Stirling and of the House of Alexander"; G.E.C.'s, and Wood's and Douglas' Peerages; Andrew Lang's "History of Scotland"; Edinburgh and Stirling Commissariot Registers; Kirkliston, Cramond, South Leith, and Corstorphine, parish registers.

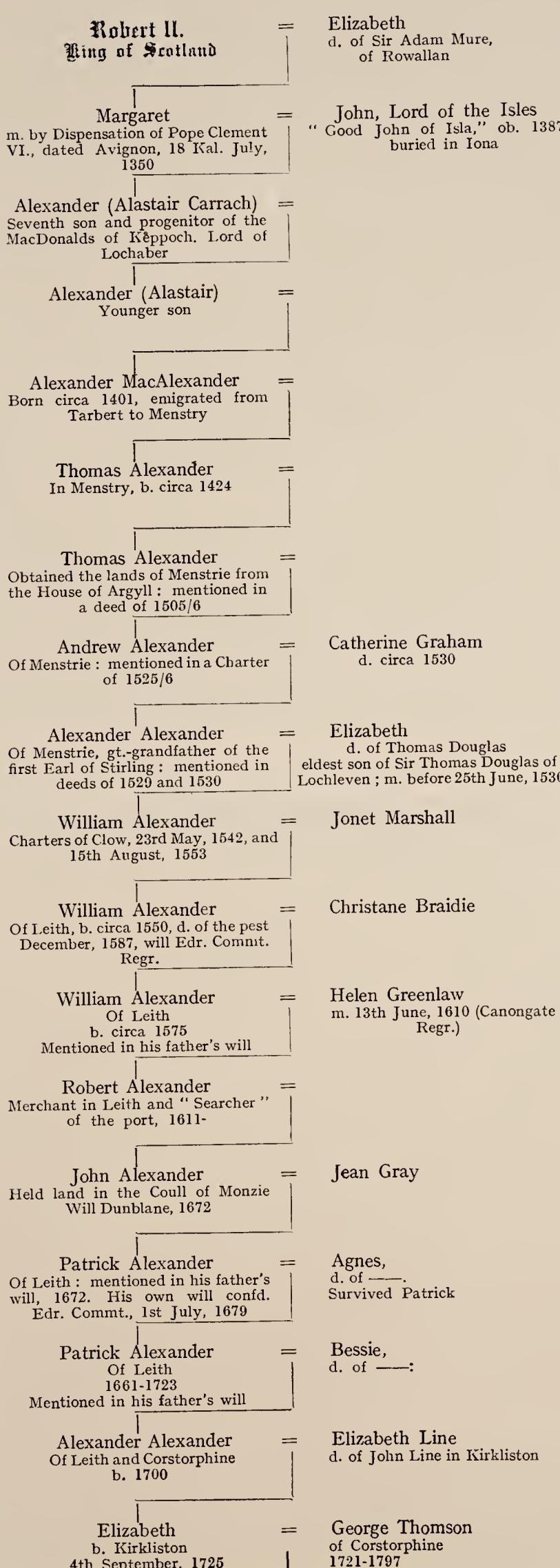
[Second Royal Descent.]

Theodore Radford Thomson has a second royal descent. As it does not properly come within the general scope of this work, it is here given in outline only. His mother's father, Sir Henry Kimber, first Bart., married a daughter of Gen. Chas. Dixon, R.E., whose father, William Dixon of Middleham, co. York, and Blackheath, married Sophia, sister of the renowned "Walking" Stewart. Their father, John Stewart, was descended from the Stewarts of Dundee, descended (see matricn. entry in Lyon Register) from a son (probably bastard) of John Stewart of Garth, son of Neil Stewart of Garth. Neil was third in descent from Alexander, Earl of Buchan ("the Wolf of Badenoch"), a son of Robert II. of Scotland (*vide supra*). Neil's wife was a daughter of the first Earl of Athole, great grandson of John of Gaunt, son of Edward III. of England (sixth in descent from William I., eighth in descent from Louis VII. of France, fifteenth in descent from Alfred, and eighteenth in descent from Charlemagne).

Refs.: Pedigree of Dixon of Middleham, in keeping of the Soc. Gen.; "Coll. Ch. of Middleham," Camden Soc.; Life of Celebrated "Walking" Stewart, London, 1822; Lyon Register; D.N.B. and refs. therefrom; C. Poyntz Stewart, "The Stewarts of Forthergill and Garth," privately printed, 1879; G.E.C.'s, Douglas' and Burke's Peerages; Marquis of Ruvigny's "Blood Royal of Britain"; Brechin Commissariot Register, S.R.S.; Par. Regrs. of St. Geo., Han. Sq., and Middleham, Yorks.]

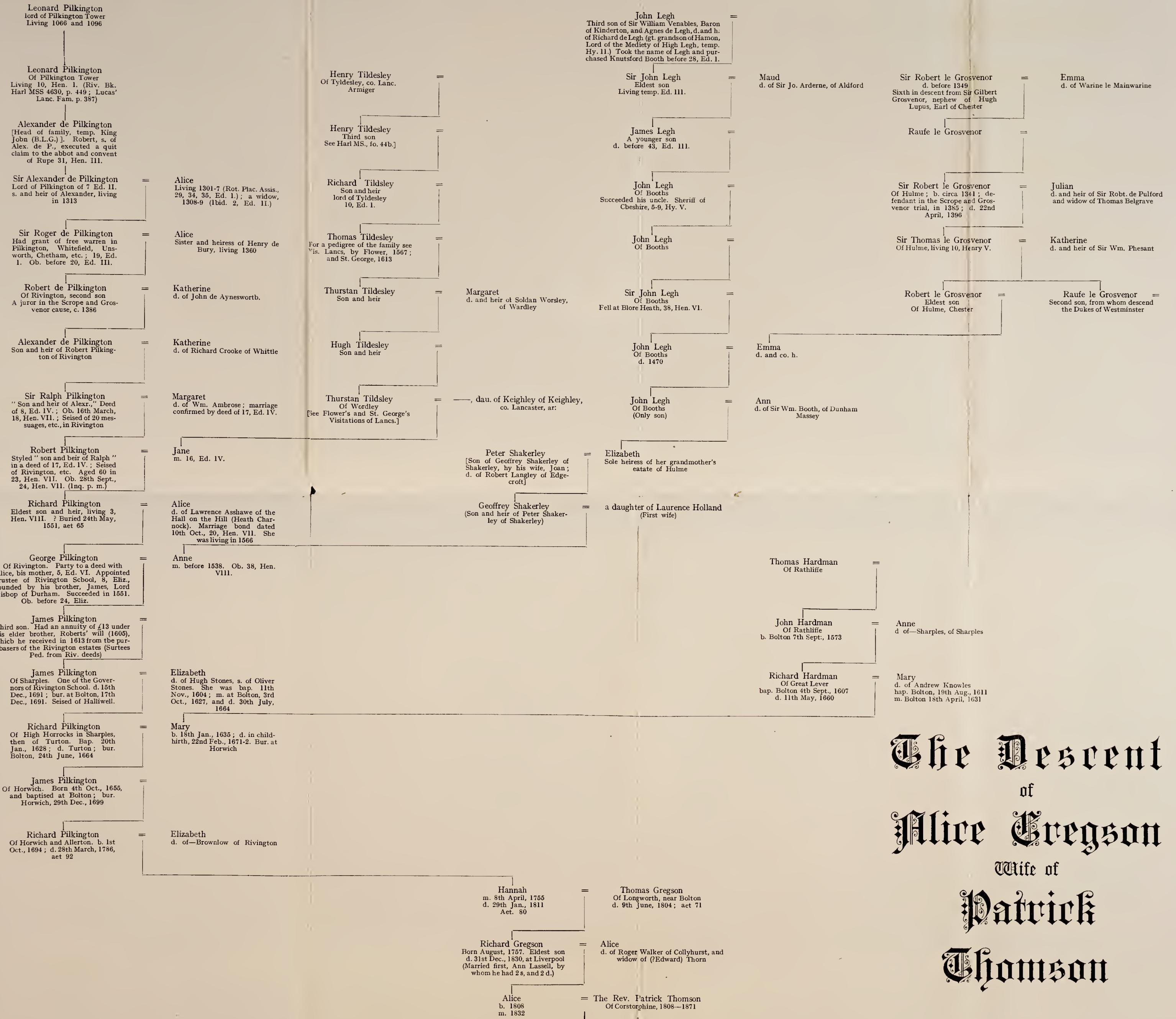
APPENDIX B.

Royal Descent.



APPENDIX C.

APPENDIX C



The Descent
of
Alice Gregson
Wife of
Patrick
Thomson



APPENDIX D.

ARMORY.

Arms of Thomson of Corstorphine, as borne by Clement Reynolds Thomson, present representative, and heir male of George Thomson of Corstorphine :—

Potent, on a bend sable, two stags heads cabossed or (impaling ; ermine, a flaming sword erect ppr. pommel and hilt or, surmounted by an open book straps and buckles of the second in chief two lozenges gules, each charged with a cross couped of the third; for Stone of Kirby Firth Hall). For crest, a gauntletted hand erect in pale holding a flaming torch proper. For motto, over the crest, a scroll bearing these words: *Veritas Prævalebit.*

Arms of Theodore Radford Thomson, younger of Corstorphine :—Potent, on a bend sa. a mullet between two stags heads cabossed or. (on an inescutcheon of pretence, per chevron ermine, or and gu, two fleurs de lys of the second and a griffins head of the first. In a canton, per chevron gu or or, two silversmith's hammers of the second and a lion rampant of the first, for Simpson). Crest, as above. Mottoes :—above the crest *Eequanimitas* and below the achievement *Veritas Prævalebit.*

Arms of Charles Sheldon Thomson as heir of the late Alexander Thomson, younger of Corstorphine. Potent on a bend engrailed sa two stags heads cabossed or.

Badge : A Flaming torch.

Livery and Mantling : Sable doubled or

Arms of Jean Mary Alice, heiress prospective of John Ross Wilson, of Bantaskine, and of the late Alexander Thomson, younger of Corstorphine : On a lozenge. First and fourth, parted per pale arg. and or, on a chevron between three mullets gu. a holly leaf of the second, second and third, potent on a bend engrailed sa. two stags heads cabossed or.

Notes.

The three Thomson coats and the coat of Wilson of Bantaskine blazoned above, are recorded in the Lyon Register. Out of the thirty-nine Thomson coats in the Register, a stag's head appears as a charge in no less than thirty.





